

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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INFO AMCONSUL BOMBAY
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AMEMBASSY KABUL
AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
CINCPAC

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, IN
SUBJECT: MRS. GANDHI'S PRESS CONFERENCE

1. MRS. GANDHI'S MARCH 16 PRESS CONFERENCE WITH FOREIGN JOURNALISTS BASED IN DELHI WAS THE FIRST SUCH MEETING WITH THE FOREIGN PRESS IN OVER THREE YEARS, ACCORDING TO ONE ACCOUNT. HER REMARKS AND HER POSTURE WERE VINTAGE INDIRA AND FOLLOWED THE FAMILIAR THEMES WE HAVE HEARD IN THE PAST. WE ASSUME THAT THE AMERICAN PRESS WILL BE REPORTING HER PRESS CONFERENCE, BUT FOR THE RECORD WE QUOTE BELOW SOME OF HER REMARKS ON INDO-US RELATIONS AND OTHER SUBJECTS. THESE ARE DRAWN FROM A TAPE RECORDING FURNISHED TO US BY ONE OF THE AMERICAN JOURNALISTS
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PRESENT.

2. NON-ALIGNMENT AND THE U.S.: MRS. GANDHI SAID THAT THE JANATA GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN MOVING INDIA AWAY FROM NON-ALIGNMENT. WHEN ASKED IN WHICH DIRECTION, SHE REPLIED THAT "STATESMEN WHO HAVE VISITED INDIA...SEEM TO THINK THERE'S A MOVE...THEY HAVE SAID THEY ARE GLAD THERE'S A CHANGE...PRESI-

DENT CARTER HAS SAID IT FOR ONE. THE UNITED STATES MUST HAVE SOMETHING ON WHICH TO BASE SUCH A STATEMENT." ASKED IF SHE OBJECTED TO THIS, MRS. GANDHI REPLIED: "NO, NO. I CERTAINLY OBJECT TO IT ONLY IF IT IS MOVING AWAY FROM NON-ALIGNMENT. I DON'T OBJECT TO GREATER FRIENDSHIP, BUT I DON'T THINK THAT FRIENDSHIP SHOULD BE AFFECTED BY A COUNTRY BEING NON-ALIGNED...PRESIDENT CARTER HAS SAID THAT NOW INDIA WILL BE CLOSER TO THE U.S., OR SOME SUCH WORDS."

3. FOREIGN INTERFERENCE: ASKED ABOUT HER PAST ALLEGATIONS OF FOREIGN INTERFERENCE IN DOMESTIC AFFAIRS, MRS. GANDHI SAID THAT "TWO ORGANIZATIONS WHICH WERE QUITE ACTIVE WERE THE SOCIALIST INTERNATIONAL AND AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL, BUT THERE WERE VARIOUS AGENCIES AT WORK HERE." SHE ALLEGED THAT SI AND AI "ENCOURAGED OPPOSITION TO THE GOVERNMENT" AND THAT THERE WAS A "VERY ORGANIZED EFFORT BY MANY COUNTRIES."

4. WESTERN PRESS AND THE EMERGENCY: MRS. GANDHI SAID "THE REACTION OF THE WESTERN PRESS TO EMERGENCY WAS OUT OF ALL PROPORTION WITH THEIR REACTION TO WHAT IS HAPPENING ANYWHERE ELSE IN THE WORLD, WHICH SOMETIMES HAPPENED ON ITS OWN AND SOMETIMES WAS BROUGHT ABOUT BY WESTERN POWERS...THE WESTERN PRESS DIDN'T COMMENT OR CRITICIZE WHEN WORSE THINGS HAPPENED IN OTHER COUNTRIES...I DON'T THINK THEY WANT THIS SUBCONTINENT TO BE FULLY INDEPENDENT AND STRONG."

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5. CIA: RESPONDING TO A SERIES OF QUESTIONS FROM THE NEW YORK TIMES CORRESPONDENT, MRS. GANDHI SAID: "I WOULD SAY THAT I DON'T THINK IT (THE CIA) WAS UNINVOLVED. INDIRECTLY, OF COURSE. I DON'T SAY THAT THEY TOOK PART DIRECTLY IN THE ELECTIONS, (BUT) YOU KNOW HOW THEY FUNCTION IN OTHER COUNTRIES...WE CAN ONLY GO BY WHAT HAS ALREADY APPEARED IN THE PRESS BY WAY OF ADMISSION OF WHAT THEY HAVE DONE IN OTHER COUNTRIES. AND IT SEEMS EXTREMELY UNLIKELY WHEN KNOWN CIA AGENTS ARE IN INDIA THAT THEY ARE HERE FOR A HOLIDAY." ASKED IF SHE THOUGHT THAT CIA AGENTS WERE ATTACHED TO THE AMERICAN EMBASSY, SHE REPLIED: "I DON'T KNOW WHERE THEY ARE ATTACHED, BUT THERE WAS A TIME WHEN SEVERAL OF THEM WHOSE NAMES HAD APPEARED IN BOOKS WHICH HAD COME OUT WERE IN INDIA."
GOHEEN

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